his acts. The very evening of his arrival in Paris after Austerlitz, a midnight message summoned the ministers to council for eight next morning. Their congratulations were brusquely cut off by the dry statement: " We have more serious matters to consider. It appears that the greatest danger to the state has not been in Austria. Let us hear the report from the minister of the treasury." The document read by Barbe-Marbois mercilessly displayed the situation: the insufficiency of income, the venality of officials, and the shifts to which he himself had been put in order to avoid, not a panic, — for that had come, — but an utter crash. Three of the guilty office-holders were summoned on the spot.
The scene, according to Mollien, could be described only as "a discharge of thunderbolts from the highest heaven for a whole hour.7' One culprit burst into tears, a second stammered weak excuses, the third was stiffened into blank silence, and all three were dismissed with a threatening gesture. The session of the council, which lasted nine hours without a break, was not ended until five o'clock in the evening. When Marbois, who, though honest himself, had failed to keep others so, finally left the room, the Emperor turned to Mollien and said: "You are now minister of the treasury. Find sixty millions stolen by the officials, and I will appoint a successor to you in the management of the sinking fund I have destined for the reward of the army." He would listen to no excuse, and could not then, or in fact at any time, be brought to understand the rise or fall, and even disappearance, of values. He thought government bonds could be kept at one price no matter what happened, and that an annual budget was simply a nuisance. "It cannot be more difficult to govern the little corner of Paris they call the Exchange than to govern France," he said. The lesson which he had to learn cost him